



# INFORMATION SHEET

## Parent Information Network



### Transition Point 6: High School to Adult Life

#### Transition: The Next Step

Transition is movement or change without interruption. It should be a smooth flow from one place or condition to another. While the transition plan for a student receiving special education services is designed to prepare him or her for life after high school, transition can start when a child enters preschool. The last of six distinct stages of transition is from high school to adult life.

#### Factors of Change

To facilitate a student's movement through the high school years, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA '04), United States Code (USC) 20 §614(d)(1)(A)(VII), requires that "...not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16 and then updated annually thereafter, the IEP must include:

- appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments re-lated to training, education, employment and independent living skills, where appropriate;
- the transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals; and
- beginning not later than one year before the child reaches the age of majority under state law, a statement that the child has been informed of the child's rights under this title, if any, that will transfer to the child on reaching the age of majority under Section 615 (m).

As a student prepares to leave high school, the transition plan, developed as part of his/her IEP, should be the guide to start the journey of "life after high school."

Some concerns and issues will need to be considered in developing the transition services component of the IEP. The response to questions, along with assessments of interests, aptitudes, skills, and temperament, will determine the approach or direction of a student's transition.

**Postsecondary education** - Will the student continue his/her education? Will the education take place in a 4-year college or university, a community college, a vocational training school, or on-the-job?

**Employment/career** - What careers or jobs has the student been able to explore? Will the student require a sheltered workshop environment, supported employment, or be able to function in competitive employment?

**Vocational education** - Will the student attend a vocational, technical, or trade school to learn the skills

needed to pursue his or her chosen career? How will the student pay to attend the school?

**Continuing and adult education** - Does the student want to take self-improvement classes at a community college or recreation center? Is the student in need of support to complete a General Educational Development (GED) Test?

**Community participation** - Has the student explored services in the community, e.g., public transportation, libraries, recreation, and leisure activities? Registering to vote, obtaining a driver's license, and registering for selective service may need to be considered.

**Independent living** - Where will the student live after exiting high school? What kinds of support will be needed to allow the student to live independently, if that is his/her choice?

**Adult services** - Will the student need services from a social service agency? Will supplemental security disability income (SSDI) be necessary to assure the individual's well being? How will health care insurance be provided?

It is with these questions in mind that the transition plan addresses eight areas for concentration during the high school years: instruction, related services, assistive technology needs, community experiences, employment objectives, adult living, daily living skills, and a functional vocational evaluation.

#### Ages and Stages: High School to Adult Life

Some students with disabilities who graduate from high school do so with the class with which they entered, taking the traditional four years to finish their studies. However, many students benefit from a five-, six-, and even seven-year program in which to complete their studies. As a result, students graduating from high school do so at ages varying between 17 and 21. Some students age-out, meaning they exit high school at the time of their twenty-second birthday or at the end of that school year, whichever the school district will permit. Under the provisions of the IDEA, a student is eligible for special education services if he/she requires special accommodations in order to benefit from his/her education program, through age 21.

## Making the Transition Smoother

For a student who wants to pursue postsecondary education, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 may be the means to ensure success. It defines a qualified individual with disabilities as "...a person with a disability who meets the academic and technical standards requisite for admission to, or participation in, the college's education program or activity." A college, university, or vocational institute may request documentation of a student's disability before providing requested academic adjustments or auxiliary aids.

For students seeking entrance to a college or university, tests such as the Scholastic Assessment Tests (SAT) or the American College Testing (ACT) must be taken. Students may request accommodations in testing format or equipment to compensate for their disability. High school counselors or a test development company listed in the next column can assist with the process.

Students who will enter the work force may be eligible for services from agencies such as the Division of Developmental Disabilities, the Social Security Administration, or the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Agencies outside the school system should participate in the development of a student's transition plan.

Additional information and assistance with transition planning may be obtained from school personnel, disability-specific organizations, or an education program specialist with the Arizona Department of Education's Exceptional Student Services.

## References

- Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services, Transition Services. (2004). *Navigating the transition highway: From tots to teens with ease*. Phoenix, AZ: Author.  
[www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals/documents/transition](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess/pinspals/documents/transition)
- Public Law 108-446. (2004). *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004*.

## Resources

- Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services, Parent Information Network. (2005). *Beyond high school: Exploring college and university options for students with disabilities; U. S. military and civilian workers: Another transition option for students with disabilities; Exploring vocational education and other training opportunities*. Phoenix, AZ: Author.
- Barclay, J. & Cobb, J. (2001). *Full life ahead: A workbook and guide to adult life for students & families of students with disabilities*. Montgomery, AL: Southeast Regional Resource Center.
- Martin, J. E. et al. (2002). *Self-directed employment: A handbook for transition teachers and employment specialists*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing.

## Organizations

- American College Testing, ACT Special Testing, P.O. Box 4028, Iowa City, IA 522434028, 319-337-1332, 319-337-1701 (TDD), [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)
- Arizona Department of Economic Security, Rehabilitation Services Administration, 1789 W. Jefferson St., Phoenix, AZ 85007, [www.de.state.az.us/rsa/](http://www.de.state.az.us/rsa/)
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| Region 1, Maricopa County    | 602-266-6752 |
| Region 2, Southeast Arizona  | 520-628-6810 |
| Region 3, Northern Arizona   | 928-779-4147 |
| Region 4, Central/SW Arizona | 602-266-6752 |
- Arizona Department of Education, 1535 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85007, 602-542-4013 or 800-352-4558, [www.ade.az.gov/ess](http://www.ade.az.gov/ess)
- Career and Technical Education, 602-364-1525, [www.ade.az.gov/cte/AZCrn](http://www.ade.az.gov/cte/AZCrn)
- HEATH Resource Center, 2121 K Street, NW, Ste. 220, Washington, DC 20037, Tel/TTY 800-544-3284 or 202-973-0904, [www.heath.gwu.edu](http://www.heath.gwu.edu)
- Scholastic Aptitude Test, Services for Students with Disabilities, P.O. Box 6226, Princeton, NJ 08541-6226, 609-771-7137, [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)